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THE ACCUSATIVE OF SPECIFICATION IN AENEID I-VI

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When some of us began the study of Virgil the comparative method had not to any great extent been applied to Latin syntax. We heard little about the Latin middle; though I do find in my old copy of Searing's Virgil on ii. 383 ("Irruimus, densis et circumfundimur armis") this note "*Circumfundimur*: The passive in a middle or reflexive sense is common." Yet "velare comas," iii. 405, this editor regarded as an example of the accusative of specification, while recognizing the principle that the passive of verbs of clothing and unclothing take a secondary accusative, as appears from the notes on ii. 392, "galeam clipeique insignis decorum | Induitur," and iv. 137, "Sidoniam picto clamydem circumdata limbo."

For two or more decades there has been a steady inroad upon the territory once assigned to the accusative of specification. The recognition of a true Latin middle and appreciation of the fruitfulness of the comparative method for Latin syntax seem to have been chiefly responsible for this tendency. The change has been most sweeping where an accusative is used with a perfect passive participle, the participle generally being regarded as a middle taking a direct object. At the same time, there is no intimation on the part of our interpreters that there is anything in common between this object of a middle and the residual instances of the accusative of specification. We seem to have two mutually exclusive categories.

From the varying results which editors and grammarians have obtained in their efforts to draw the line between these two categories it would appear that the criteria are by no means easy of application. The differences are not merely between earlier and later editors. For example, the Greenough-Kittredge edition still places i. 228, "oculos suffusa," under accusative of specification as against Bennett, Knapp, Fairclough-Brown, and Frieze-Dennison, who all take it as

a direct object. The Frieze-Dennison edition uses this passage, "*oculos suffusa*," as a sort of measuring-rod for a considerable number of other passages. In view of this fact the wording of the note is interesting. It is as follows: "*oculos*: accusative with the passive verb *suffusa*, in imitation of the Greek." One might think that the "Greek accusative" in the technical sense was intended, were it not for other notes, e. g., on i. 320, where the following explanatory phrase is added: "with the reflexive force of the Greek middle voice." Yet what is the hapless student to do who is sent to this same i. 228 for the explanation of i. 589, "*os umerosque deo similis*?" Of course this latter note is inadvertently carried over from the original Frieze edition in which the accusative in i. 228 was explained as specification. Editors sometimes perform very delicate feats in discrimination. For instance, one edition classifies "*mentem pressus*," iii. 47, as specification and "*animum arrecti*," i. 597, as direct object. Most recent editors take both as specification.

The principle followed by editors of Virgil seems to be that wherever the participle can possibly be conceived of as a middle with a direct object the construction is so to be classified, regardless of the features which it may possess in common with the acknowledged accusatives of specification. The process began with cases where the middle force seemed fairly appropriate, but once begun there has been found no logical stopping-place; and now we are asked to believe that the literal meaning of "*oculos suffusa*," i. 228, is "having filled her eyes." The serpents are represented as having dyed their eyes with blood and fire preparatory to their attack on the ill-fated Laocoön, ii. 210, who a little later, ii. 221, spatters the sacred fillets with gore and deadly venom before trying to throw off the dreadful coils.

Our latest American school edition, that of Fairclough and Brown, an edition which gives large place to the direct object of the middle participle, sometimes uses a translation that at first sight seems to carry over the force of the direct object, e. g., "having hands bound," for "*manus revinctum*," ii. 57, and "having its foot bound," for "*innexa pedem*," v. 511. Yet this is a no less exact translation for the accusative of specification, as we see when we render "*nuda genu*," i. 320, "having her knee bare." We may even say that this and other

idiomatic translations of the so-called object of the middle participle show that the participle is felt to be essentially an adjective, descriptive of its substantive at the time indicated by the predicate. "Having hands bound" or "with bound hands" is logically nearer "bound as to his hands" than to "having bound his hands."

Where the participle cannot possibly be construed as a middle there is still open a possibility for those who for some reason seem called upon to reduce the accusative of specification to the lowest possible limit. The edition of Papillon and Haigh recognizes in the accusative with certain participles an imitation of the secondary accusative in Greek used with a passive; e. g., *ἐπιτετραμμένοι τὴν φυλακὴν*. This is presented in connection with the vexed and exceptional ii. 273: "perque pedes traiectus lora tumentis." This would then correspond to an active form "eum (or ei) traiecit lora," the secondary object being retained after the primary object has become the subject of the passive. This seems neither impossible nor altogether conclusive. The same explanation is then applied to "crinis effusa," iv. 509, and "interfusa genas," iv. 644. I can find but one thing in common between the two last-mentioned examples and the Greek construction with the passive of *ἐπιτρέπω*—an accusative is used with a participle truly passive. The course of reasoning seems to be: With certain Greek verbs an accusative of secondary object is used with participles truly passive; hence when in Latin the accusative is used with a participle which cannot, without too much violence, be interpreted as a middle, it must be after this Greek analogy rather than an accusative of specification, a construction which undoubtedly is freely used in Latin. The same editors regard "suffusa," i. 228, as a passive used reflexively like the Greek middle. Is it sound to differentiate the two examples, "oculos suffusa," i. 228, and "interfusa genas," iv. 664? It is interesting to note that Papillon and Haigh do not employ this explanation for ii. 57, "manus revinctum," where it would seem equally available, but give the peculiar note, "accusative of the part." This might mean specification, but they add, "see on i. 228," that is, direct object of a middle. If one were looking for Greek analogies for a secondary accusative of the part affected, the idiom *ἀποτεμνέσθαι τὴν κεφαλὴν* would seem more apposite. Perhaps it was passed over as not yielding, ready to hand,

a participial example. The general lack of agreement, even among recent editors, in dealing with this topic is illustrated by the fact that Fairclough and Brown follow Papillon and Haigh in explaining ii. 273 as a secondary accusative with the passive, but take iv. 644 as the direct object of the middle, while "*manus revinctum*," ii. 57, which Papillon and Haigh take as object of the middle, Fairclough and Brown explain as a secondary accusative.

A query or two: Because verbs of clothing take a secondary accusative *of the garment*, is Knapp, for instance, justified in explaining "*insternor umeros*," ii. 722, by this principle? Again, supposing "*insternor*" to be a middle, as is not unlikely, can we be quite sure that it is an indirect rather than a direct middle? "*Accingor*," ii. 671 is "*I gird myself*," and "*sternimur*" iii. 509, is "*We throw ourselves*," may not "*insternor umeros*" be "*I cover myself, to be more specific, my shoulders?*" The same question applies to "*velare comas*," iii. 405, in view of "*cervici imponere nostrae*," "*place yourself upon my shoulder*" (ii. 707).

There still remain certain examples of the accusative of specification which cannot possibly be explained either as objects of participles in the middle or as secondary accusatives with the passive. It is pertinent to observe the characteristics of these conceded cases and to ask to what extent cases now otherwise interpreted share these characteristics.

The accusative of specification with an adjective admits of no ambiguity. We note "*nuda genu*," i. 320; "*os umerosque deo similis*," i. 589; "*nigrantis terga iuencos*," vi. 243; and the series in vi. 495 ff., "*Deiphobum vidit et lacerum crudeliter ora, ora manusque ambas, populataque tempora raptis auribus et truncas inhoneste vulnere naris*." Somewhat different are the following: "*omnia similis*," iv. 558; "*Cressa genus*," v. 285; and "*cetera Graius*," iii. 594 (but notice the parts enumerated in apposition with "*omnia*"). In each passage of the first-mentioned group we find a descriptive adjective applied to an object, accompanied by an accusative limiting the application of the adjective, or designating the part of the object to which the adjective applies; to re-enumerate, "*nuda genu*," "*os umerosque similis*," "*nigrantis terga*," and "*lacerum ora, manus, tempora, naris*." The accusatives in the second group

equally limit the application of the descriptive words, only each accusative designates not a part but an aspect of the object described, i. e., "omnia similis," "cetera Graius," and "Cressa genus."

But the descriptive word may be a perfect passive participle which becomes practically an adjective picturing the state which is the consequence of an act, either of the one described or of another. "Laniatum," as used in vi. 494, is a good example. The force of the word is as truly descriptive as is the adjective "lacerum" in the next line. With "laniatum" the specification is expressed by the ablative, with "lacerum" in the next line by the accusative. In the two lines we have a perfect parallel, a descriptive term followed by a noun specifying its application. The construction is perfectly unambiguous, but if Virgil had written "laniatum ora" we should have a parallel to passages which are interpreted as passives with secondary accusatives or even the middle with a direct object, for Fairclough and Brown actually interpret as middle with direct object v. 511, "innexa pedem." Were they tricked by their idiomatic rendering "having its foot bound?" There are still examples which the editors, with practical unanimity, recognize as presenting the true accusative of specification with passive verbs or participles, as "tremefacta comam," ii. 629, and "mentem pressus," iii. 47. It is also generally granted that we have true specification in such a case as "vultum movetur," vi. 470. All these conceded cases have this in common: an object is described by the use of an adjective, a participle, or a verb, and then an accusative is introduced designating the part or aspect of the object to which the description more specifically applies.

Now, there are passages which have precisely the characteristics which we have noted in cases of admitted specification, but which are being classified otherwise. The descriptive word is usually a perfect passive participle whose meaning, like "laniatum" above, makes natural its use as a descriptive adjective. An idiomatic translation invariably suggests contemporaneous condition rather than prior action. An attempt to translate into terms of prior action involves wresting the natural force of the passage. Of course, such a descriptive participle implies a prior act, either by the qualified object or by another. In the former case the present tendency is to

interpret the participle as a middle with a direct object, in the latter case as a passive with a secondary accusative. There is no attempt to show that in other connections the verb in question tends in the former case to develop a middle, or in the latter case to take a secondary accusative. It is conceivable that every perfect passive participle of the type under consideration should be explained in one or the other of these ways, and such seems to be the goal toward which editors are tending. The possibility of each construction may be supported by analogies from both Greek and Latin, but possibility is not probability, much less certainty. If there were no assured Latin accusative of specification, it might be legitimate to resolve hypothetical instances into classes thus founded; but in view of the indisputable character and clearly marked characteristics of the usage, what recognized scientific principle justifies one in separating from the other possessors of the common characteristics all those instances which might possibly have originated through this influence or that? In passing, we may notice that it is quite possible to recognize the direct object of the middle and the secondary accusative with the passive as having contributed to the development of the Latin accusative of specification without attempting to distinguish and to set up as distinct categories the instances where such influence has been operative.

To be specific, can we imagine that the Roman understood Virgil in i. 228 to mean that Venus, sadder than usual and *after having filled her eyes with tears*, addressed her august sire? The very fact that "suffusa" is joined with the adjective "tristior" shows that it was felt to be descriptive of contemporaneous state. Suppose that in i. 320 Virgil had written "nudata genu" instead of "nuda genu," would "genu" have seemed to the Romans to stand in a different relation to the descriptive word? The responsibility for the state expressed by the participle is a comparatively unimportant circumstance as over against the characteristics connecting "lacerum ora," vi. 495, and "tremefacta comam," ii. 629, examples of specification, with such instances as:

lacrimis oculos suffusa nitentis, i. 228;
 Dido voltum demissa profatur, i. 561;
 His animum arrecti dictis, i. 579;

manus iuvenem . . . post terga revinctum, ii. 57;
 ardentis oculos suffecti sanguine et igni, ii. 210;
 perfusus sanie vittas atroque veneno, ii. 221;
 mentem formidine pressus, iii. 47;
 et circum Iliades crinem de more solutae, iii. 65;
 vittis et sacra redimitus tempora lauro, iii. 81;
 crinis effusa sacerdos, iv. 509;
 unum exuta pedem vinclis, iv. 518;
 sanguineam volvens aciem, maculisque trementis
 interfusa genas, et pallida morte futura, iv. 643-44;
 nudatosqueumeros oleo perfusa nitescit, v. 135;
 puniceis ibant evincti tempora taenis, v. 269;
 quis innexa pedem malo pendebat ab alto, v. 511;
 caput tonsae foliis evinctus olivae, v. 774;
 maestio defixus lumina voltu, vi. 156;
 vipereum crinem vittis innexa cruentis, vi. 281.

Of course these passages do not all stand on the same plane with regard to the violence involved in interpreting the accusatives as direct objects of the participles. In some cases the interpretation is absolutely grotesque, in others not especially inappropriate. The defender of the middle interpretation will doubtless urge that the incongruity is in the literal translation and not in the essential thought. We reply that the literal translation should intelligibly suggest the meaning. In few of the instances before us is it natural to think of the noun as governed by the participle, any more than it is natural to think of the author as asserting, in the given connection, the agency of the act implied in the participle. In these passages the context demands that not the prior act but the resultant state be the prominent element. With a middle participle with direct object the exact converse seems the natural thing. "Perfusus," "having been stained," passes readily into "stained," descriptive of contemporary state. An examination of almost any page of text will show how large a proportion of perfect passive participles have become virtual adjectives. But can "having stained his fillets" with equal readiness eliminate the suggestion of the agent and his act, becoming merely "having his fillets stained" or "with stained fillets?"

The current interpretation of the "oculos suffusa" group requires us to assume that certain verbs with a broad range of meaning developed special deponent forms and that these forms were used in a

special idiomatic sense not frequent with ordinary deponents;¹ that by pure coincidence both the form and the meaning, as indicated by idiomatic translation, are so close to the clearly marked type of the accusative of specification that trained scholars have the utmost difficulty in distinguishing between them; that this intolerable confusion is to be escaped by discriminating against specification in favor of the rival interpretations, and that thus practically the entire group can be kept together. Is this sound and scientific? If the group is to be kept together why discriminate against specification? Virgil uses the ablative of specification with a participle, e. g., "laniatum corpore toto," vi. 494, and "armis opibusque parati," ii. 799; why should not the accusative under similar circumstances express the same idea, as it certainly does in the series with "lacerum," vi. 495? The man who is impressed by the analogy of certain instances of the Latin middle or the secondary accusative tries to set aside, as distinct mutually exclusive classes, parts of the territory of the old accusative of specification which seem to resemble these respective constructions. Is it sure that grammarians were ever called upon to make such a division? Does not the sequel already suggest that the older interpreters were essentially sounder than their successors in recognizing the unity of the whole body of material? May not the direct object of the middle and the secondary accusative with a passive have contributed to the development of a construction which to Roman feeling was homogeneous?

¹ Of about seventy-five instances of the perfect participle of deponent verbs in the first half of the *Aeneid* the greater part are unquestionably true perfects expressing action, not state. The example most closely parallel to the "oculos suffecta" type is "mentum . . . subnixus," iv. 217. If "subnixus" is a true deponent, "having supported his chin" here becomes equal to "having his chin supported," and the parallel is complete. But the lexicons define "subnixus" like a passive, "supported." If to Roman feeling it was in general a passive, notwithstanding its connection with "nitor," then the passage simply belongs to the "oculos suffusa" class instead of being a parallel from the field of the deponent. "Subnixus" occurs again, without an object, in iii. 402. Though "oblitus," v. 174, 334, 703, and "conlapsa," iv. 391, approach, if they do not reach, the adjective force, they are not attended by accusatives. In a considerable group the participle, principally of "amplector" or some compound of "nitor," sometimes with but oftener without an object, seems to express contemporaneous action. For examples with object see ii. 214, 218, 490, 517, 673; iii. 607; iv. 686; v. 86, 708; vi. 332. Here the act is clearly predicated of the agent, only the act seems contemporaneous as in the "tunsae pectora" group (i. 481; iv. 589, 590).

We have here a stream that flows within clearly marked banks. In order to give full recognition to contributing streams it is not necessary to insist that we have three distinct parallel rivers. The accusative with participles that are essentially descriptive adjectives ought not lightly to be separated from the accusative with other descriptive adjectives. The accusative of specification as used by Virgil has such definite characteristics that the presumption ought to be in favor of its integrity. It should not be the receptacle for a residuum which cannot by any ingenious wresting be otherwise accounted for.